

December 4, 2020

The Honorable Donald Rucker, M.D.
National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C Street SW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20201

Re: The Gravity Project's Submission To Include Social Determinants of Health in the U.S. Core Data for Interoperability, Version 2, for Better Care and Better Health Nationwide

Dear National Coordinator Rucker:

Blue Shield of California is in full support of the Gravity Project and its efforts to embed capacity in the health system to collect, analyze and use social determinants of health data to improve health outcomes and promote equity.

Experts have long known that social and environmental determinants of health explain most of a person's and population's health status. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to highlight this reality daily across the nation. Blue Shield of California's priorities will continue to focus on the member's health in all aspects of their lives, including social determinants of health. By providing our members with access to resources that enhance quality of life, we can have a significant influence on individual and population health outcomes. Through the Gravity Project's submissions to add critical domains such as food insecurity, housing instability, transportation insecurity, social isolation, and stress to the USCDI, our teams will be better prepared to support the full scope of our members' needs, as well as identify where our existing solutions need additional capacity and where we need new interventions.

We are honored to be part of the Gravity Project Steering Committee and will work to integrate the Gravity Project's recommendations and findings into the Blue Shield of California system wherever possible, as we believe this is the direction the field must go in order to truly move the needle towards providing quality, affordable, sustainable health care for all Californians.

Sincerely,

Shannon Cosgrove

Shannon Cosgrove, MHA
Director, Community Health